

Kolita Sutta

The Discourse on Kolita

[Moggallāna and the noble silence]

(Saṃyutta Nikāya 21.1/2:373 f)

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2008

Introduction

Mahā Moggallāna, or more popularly Moggallāna, is his clan name, while Kolita is his personal name.

The Kolita Sutta is nearly identical with **the Dutīya Jhāna Pañha Sutta** (S 40.2). While the latter centres around the second dhyana, this former sutta has “the noble silence” (*ariya tuṅhī, bhāva*) in its place. Both these suttas refer to Moggallāna’s week of striving for arhathood.¹

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The Discourse on Kolita

(S 21.1/2:373 f)

Thus have I heard,

1 At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha, piṇḍika’s Park in Jeta’s Grove near Sāvattthī.

2 Then the venerable Mahā Moggallāna addressed the monks thus:

“Avuso bhikshus! [Brother monks!]”

“Avuso!” the monks answered to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna in assent.

Theory

3 The venerable Mahā Moggallāna said this:

“Here, avuso, while I was in solitary retreat, a reflection arose in my mind thus:

“‘Noble silence! Noble silence!’ so it is said. What now is noble silence?”

4 This, avuso, occurred to me:

‘Here, bhikshus, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he attains and dwells in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness *born of concentration*.’²

This is called the noble silence.

Practice

5 Then, avuso, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, I attained and dwelled in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.

While I dwelled therein, avuso, perception and attention accompanied by initial application [thinking]³ assailed me.⁴

¹ See **Dutīya Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.2/4:263 f) = SD 24.12a.

² *Idha bhikkhu vitakka, vicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhataṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicārānaṃ samādhijaṃ pīti, sukhaṃ dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.*

³ *Vitakka, vicāra*, tr elsewhere as “thinking and pondering.” While in the 1st dhyana, *vitakka, vicāra* is part of the concentration process, it becomes a hindrance to the arising of the 2nd dhyana. At this level, thinking is a distraction

- 6 Then, avuso, the Blessed One approached me by means of psychic power and said this to me:
 ‘Moggallāna, Moggallāna! Do not be heedless, brahmin, regarding the noble silence:
 steady your mind in the noble silence, *ariye tuṅhī, bhāve cittaṃ saṅṭhapehi,*
 unify your mind in the noble silence, *ariye tuṅhī, bhāve cittaṃ ekodiṃ karohi,*
 concentrate your mind in the noble silence, *ariye tuṅhī, bhāve cittaṃ samādaha.’*

Realization

7 Then, avuso, on another occasion, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, I attained and dwelled in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.

Spiritual friendship

8 Now, avuso, if one speaking rightly, were to say, ‘He is a disciple who attained to greatness of direct knowledge with the help of the Teacher,’

it is of me that one speaking rightly would say, ‘He is a disciple who attained to greatness of direct knowledge with the help of the Teacher.’”

— evaṃ —

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that prevents the meditator from progressing to the 2nd dhyana. S:B erroneously tr as “accompanied by thought and examination,” reading it as *vitakka, vicāra, saḥagatā*, when it should be simply *vitakka, saḥagatā*. See foll n.

⁴ *Tassa mayham, āvuso, iminā vihārena viharato vitakka, saḥagatā saññā, manasikārā samudācaranti.* Comy: He was distracted by thinking and pondering.